
amar chitra katha
No. 213 Rs. 2.50
VELU THAMPI
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
—A VALIANT SON OF KERALA

On the south-western coast of India lies Kerala, a sunny land, full of palm-fringed beaches and quiet lagoons. Kerala as we know it today came into existence only after independence. Formerly, it consisted of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin and the British district of Malabar. By the eighteenth century, the British had already established a foothold in Travancore. The East India Company had a treaty with the Maharaja of Travancore by which the Maharaja agreed to pay the British a yearly tribute of six lakhs of rupees in return for British protection.

Balarama Varma was only sixteen years old when he became the Maharaja of Travancore in 1798. His Diwan (or Dalawa), Jayanathan Sankaran Namboodiri, taking advantage of his youth, imposed crushing taxes on the people and merrily put the money into his own pocket. With the British Resident on his side, he enjoyed unlimited power and became a despot. The people could bear this no longer: the time was ripe for revolt. They rebelled, led by the heroic Velu Thampi, and the Diwan was overthrown.

Velu Thampi, later, became the Diwan. He reduced the taxes and introduced many reforms, but he ruled with an iron hand. When the East India Company began interfering with the internal affairs of Travancore—Diwan Velu Thampi took up arms against the British. The Minister of Cochin, Paliathu Achchan and his forces also joined the struggle. Velu Thampi issued a rousing cry for freedom and mustered support in his fight against the imperialists. But it was an uneven battle, for the British were too strong for him.

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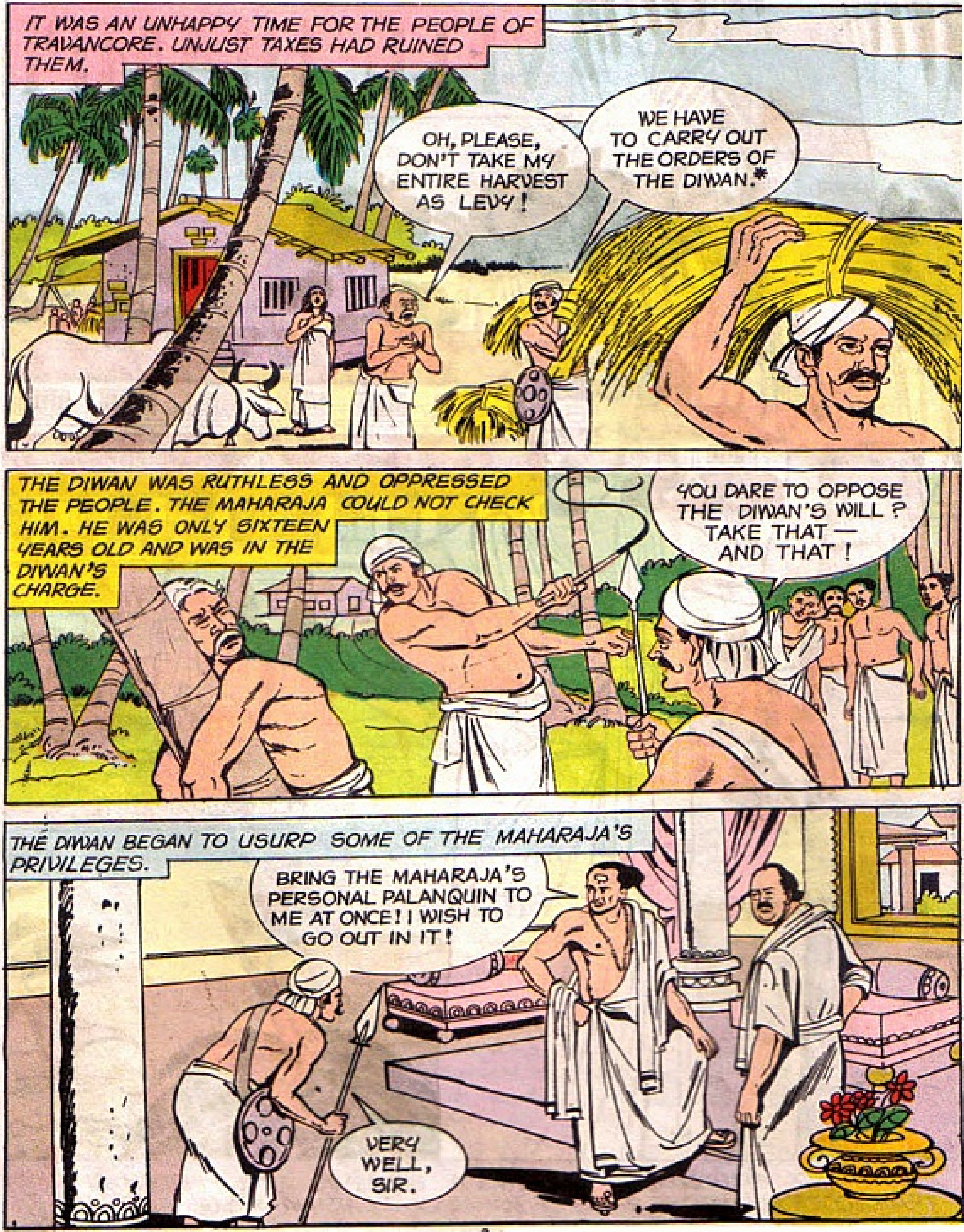
May 1, 1980

Published by H.G. Mirchandani, for India Book House Education Trust, Rusi Mansion, 29, Nathalal Parekh Marg, Bombay-400 039 and printed by him at IBH Printers, Marol Naka, Mathuradas Vissanji Road, Andheri (East), Bombay-400 059.

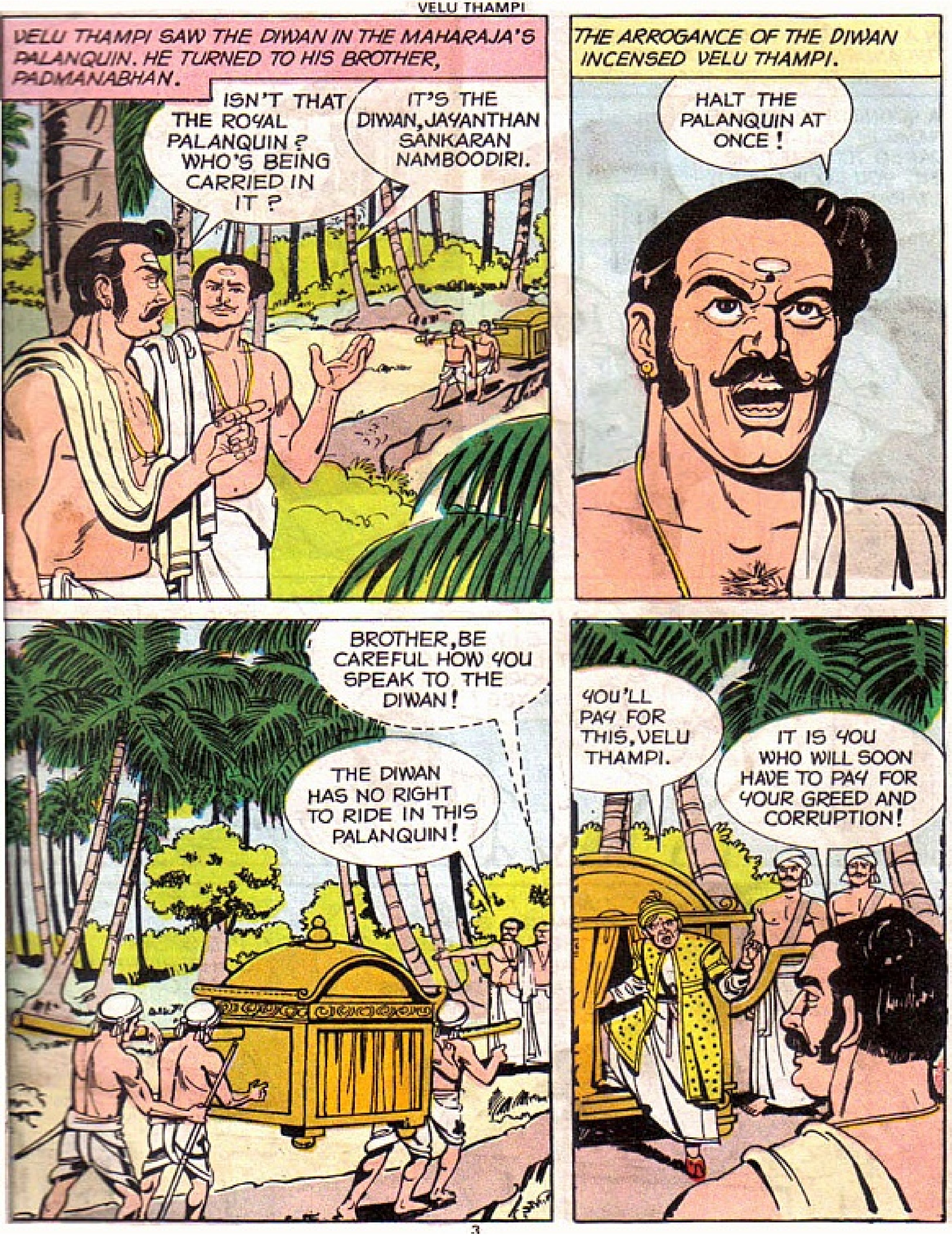
Editor: Anant Pai Script : Radha M. Nair Artworks : M. Mohanda



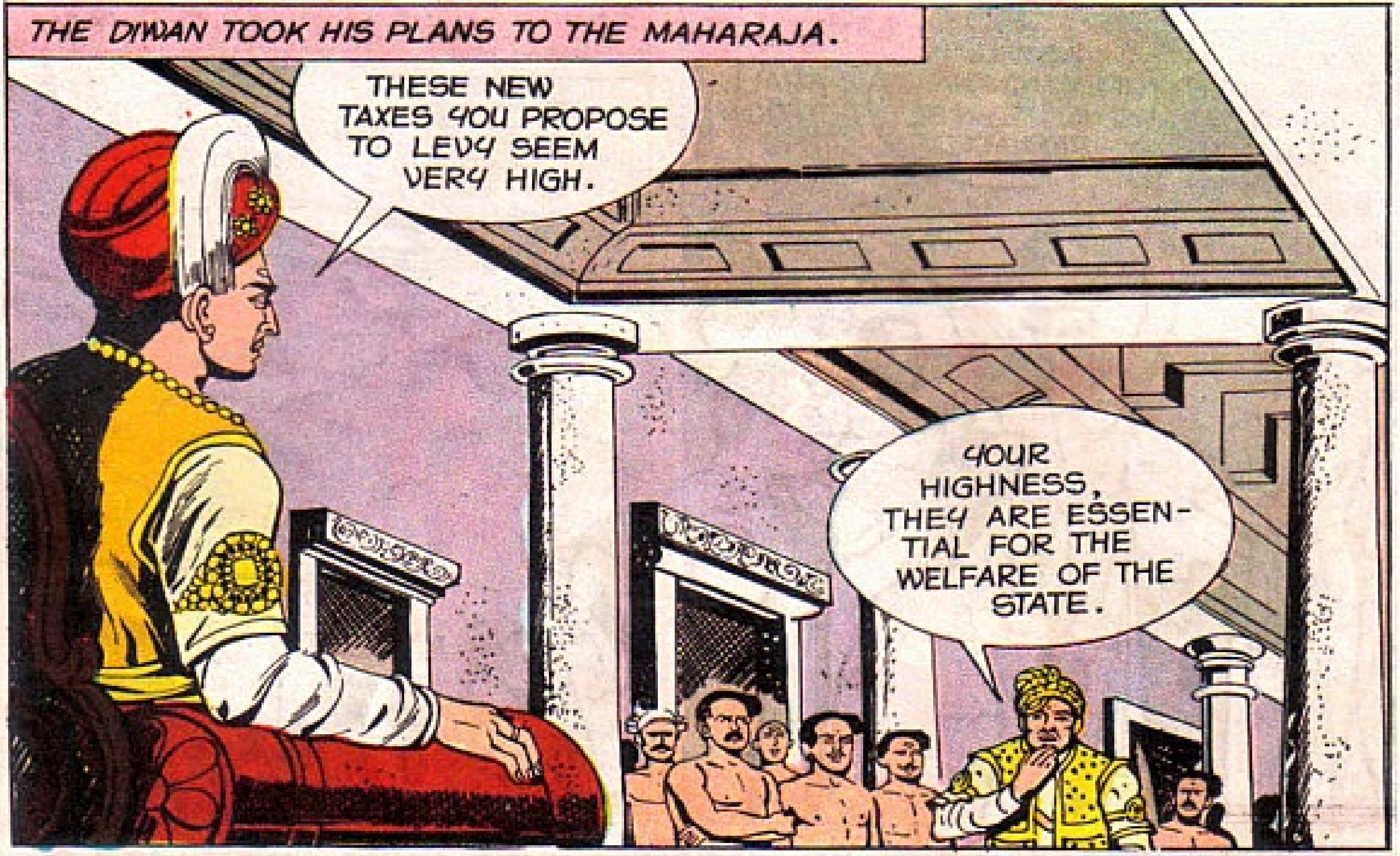
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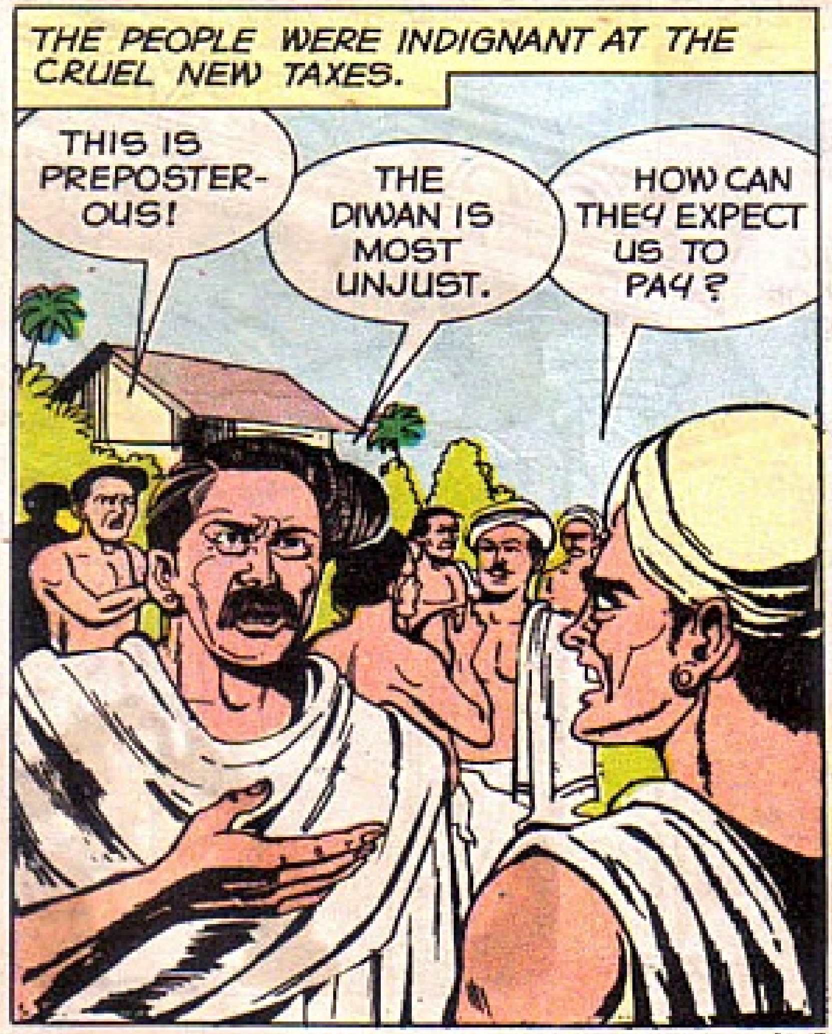


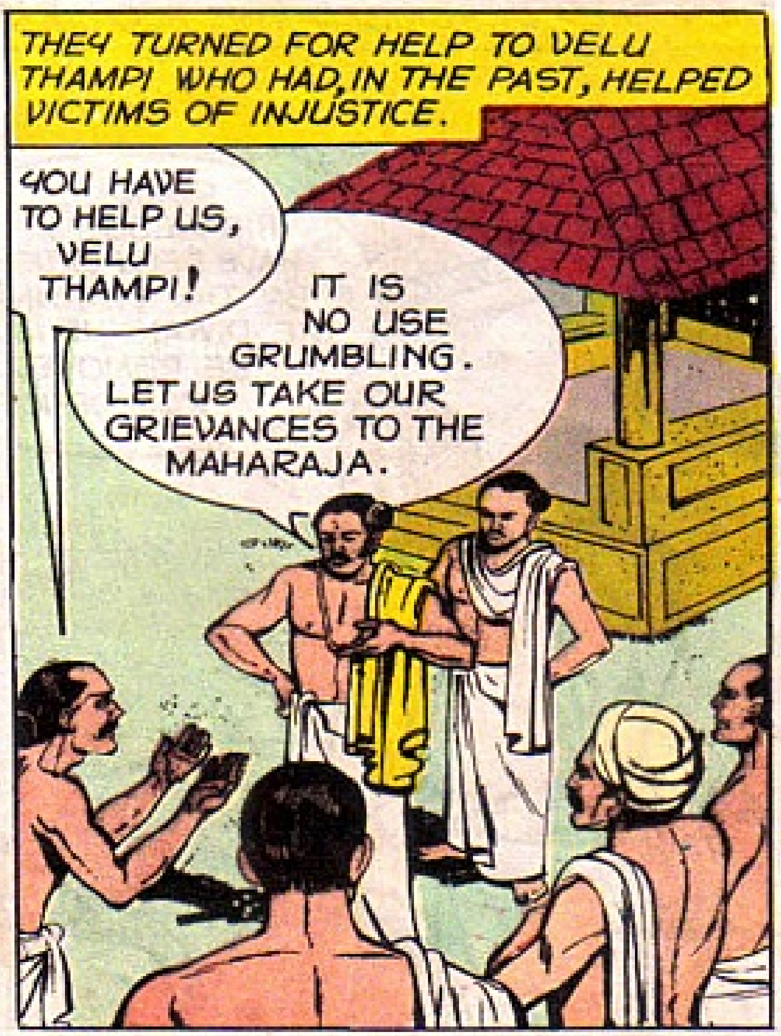
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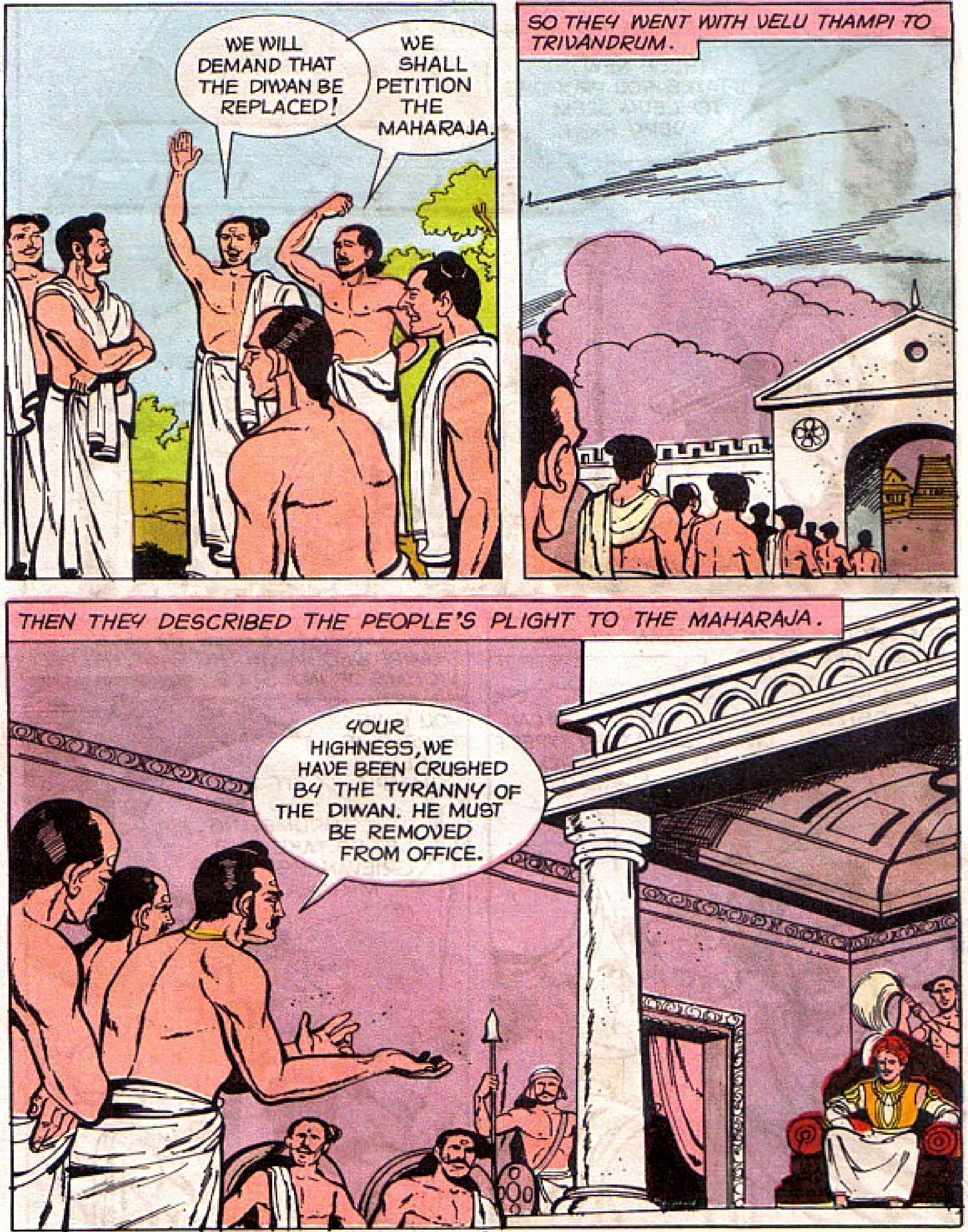

VELU THAMPI SAW THE DIWAN IN THE MAHARAJA'S PALANQUIN. HE TURNED TO HIS BROTHER, PADMANABHAN.
ISN'T THAT THE ROYAL PALANQUIN ? WHO'S BEING CARRIED IN IT ?
IT'S THE DIWAN, JAYANTHAN SANKARAN NAMBOODIRI.
THE ARROGANCE OF THE DIWAN INCENSED VELU THAMPI.
HALT THE PALANQUIN AT ONCE !
BROTHER, BE CAREFUL HOW YOU SPEAK TO THE DIWAN !
THE DIWAN HAS NO RIGHT TO RIDE IN THIS PALANQUIN !
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, VELU THAMPI.
IT IS YOU WHO WILL SOON HAVE TO PAY FOR YOUR GREED AND CORRUPTION !


IN A RAGE, THE DIWAN RETURNED TO TRIVANDRUM, THE CAPITAL. HE MET HIS FAITHFUL FRIEND, TARAKAN, A PLANTER.
A YOUNGSTER WHOSE NAME IS VELU THAMPI DARED TO INSULT ME.... BUT YOU LOOK UPSET, TARAKAN. WHAT'S THE MATTER?
I AM IN REAL TROUBLE. I NEED MORE MONEY. HOW SHALL I RAISE IT?
HA! HA! THAT'S SIMPLE! WE SHALL JUST LEVY SOME MORE TAXES!
GOOD IDEA! LET THE PEOPLE PAY FOR OUR PLEASURES!
AFTER ALL, WE ENJOY THE SUPPORT OF THE BRITISH RESIDENT, MACAULAY. EVEN THE MAHARAJA DOES HIS BIDDING. SO WE NEED FEAR NO ONE.
I'LL SPEAK TO HIS HIGHNESS AT ONCE.

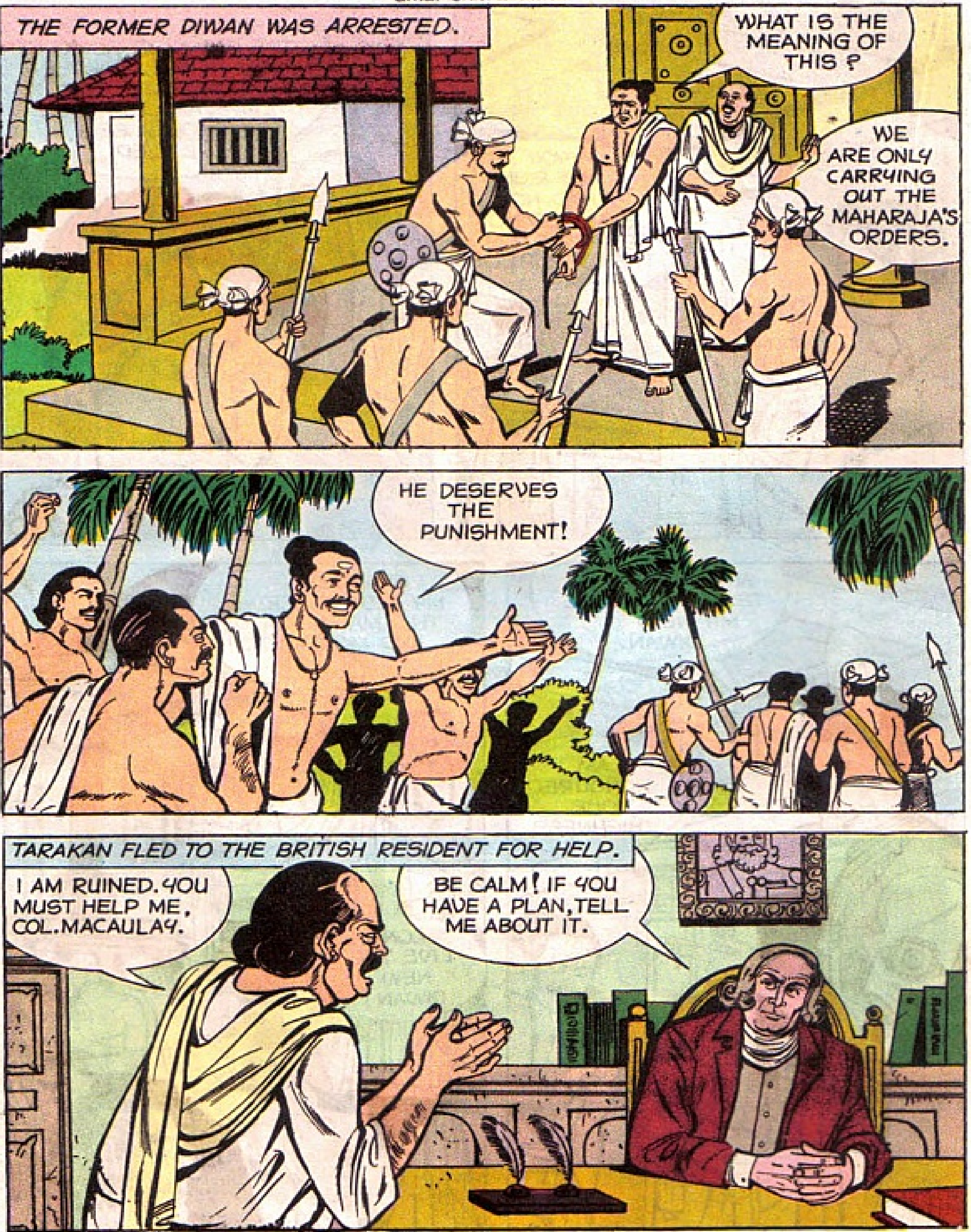

THE DIWAN TOOK HIS PLANS TO THE MAHARAJA.
THESE NEW TAXES YOU PROPOSE TO LEVY SEEM VERY HIGH.
YOUR HIGHNESS, THEY ARE ESSEN-TIAL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE STATE.

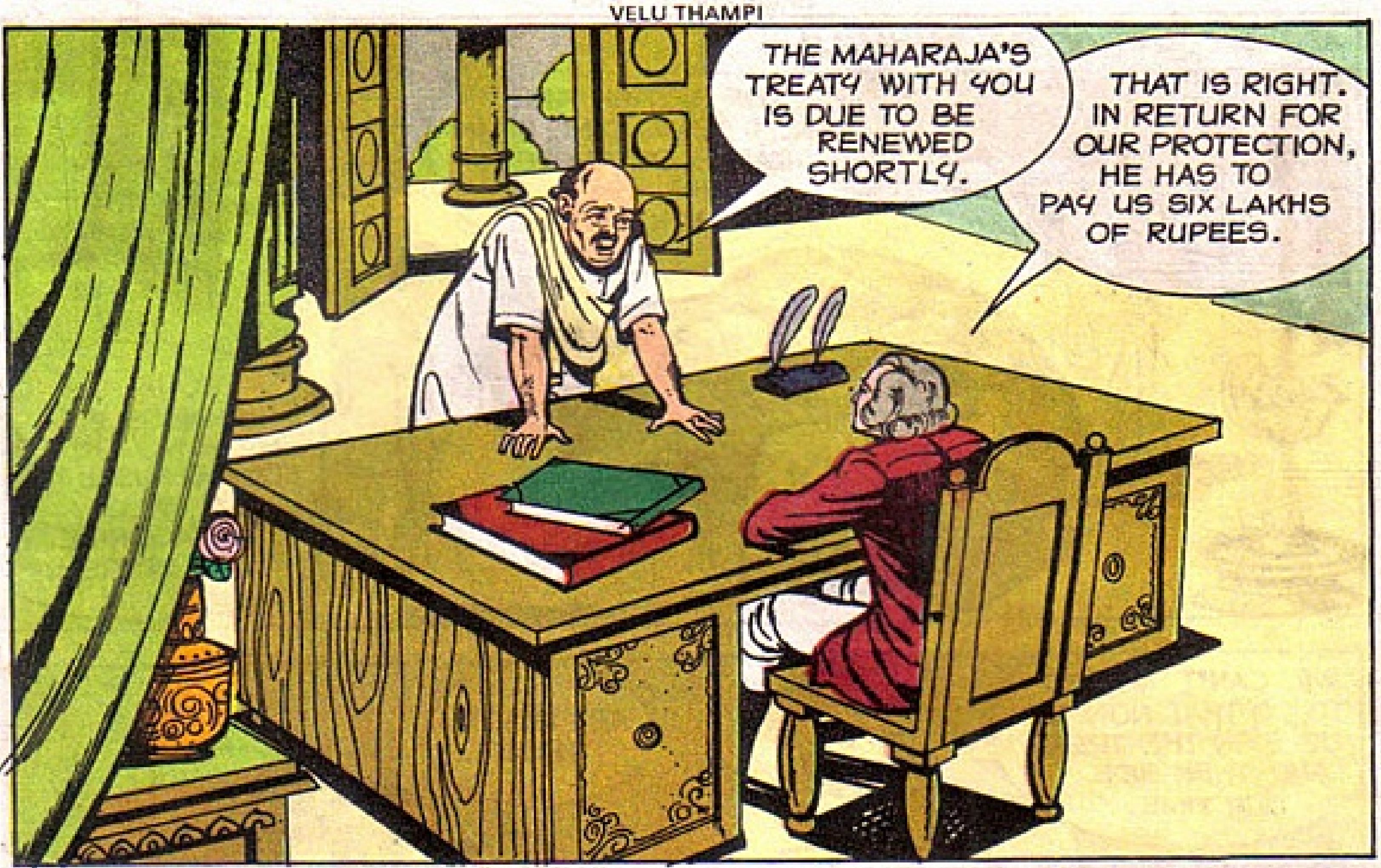

THE PEOPLE WERE INDIGNANT AT THE CRUEL NEW TAXES.
THIS IS PREPOSTER-OUS!
THE DIWAN IS MOST UNJUST.
HOW CAN THEY EXPECT US TO PAY?


THEY TURNED FOR HELP TO VELU THAMPI WHO HAD, IN THE PAST, HELPED VICTIMS OF INJUSTICE.
YOU HAVE TO HELP US, VELU THAMPI!
IT IS NO USE GRUMBLING. LET US TAKE OUR GRIEVANCES TO THE MAHARAJA.

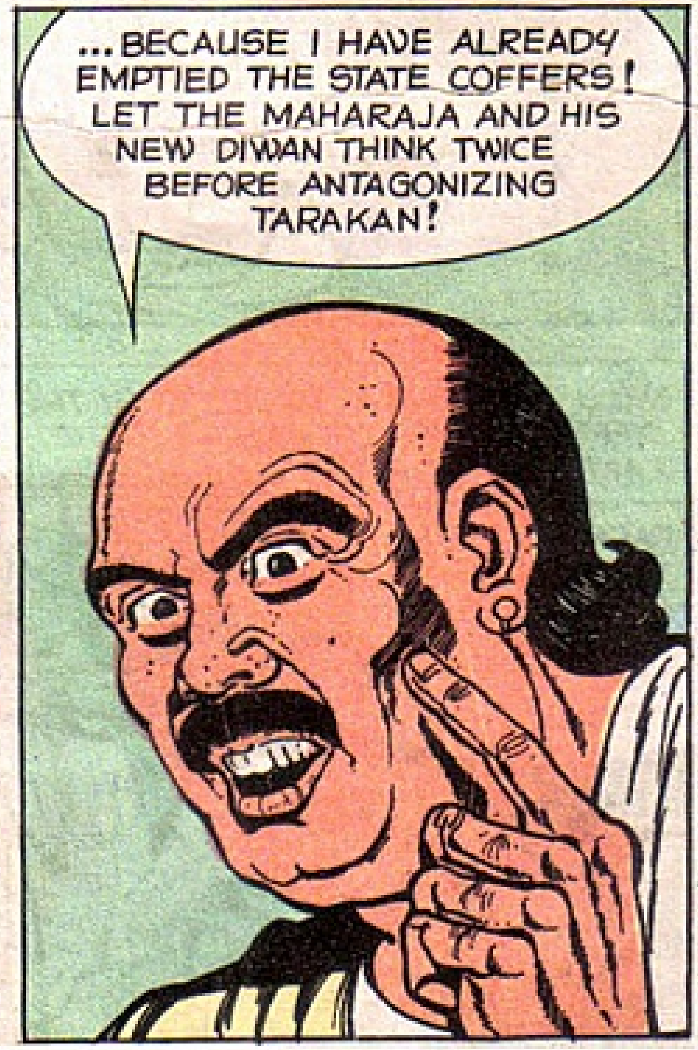

WE WILL DEMAND THAT THE DIWAN BE REPLACED!
WE SHALL PETITION THE MAHARAJA.
SO THEY WENT WITH VELU THAMPI TO TRIVANDRUM.
THEN THEY DESCRIBED THE PEOPLE'S PLIGHT TO THE MAHARAJA.
YOUR HIGHNESS, WE HAVE BEEN CRUSHED BY THE TYRANNY OF THE DIWAN. HE MUST BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE.


YOU ARE RIGHT. I HAD NOT REALISED HOW DEEP-ROOTED THE CORRUPTION WAS.
I HEREBY ORDER THAT THE DIWAN BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE. I ORDER THAT HIS EARS BE CUT OFF, AND THAT HE SHOULD BE EXILED.
AND YOU, VELU THAMPI, SHALL BE MY NEW DIWAN.
I AM HONOURED, YOUR HIGHNESS.
I SHALL DO MY BEST TO SERVE THE MAHARAJA AND MY COUNTRY.
LONG LIVE THE NEW DIWAN!

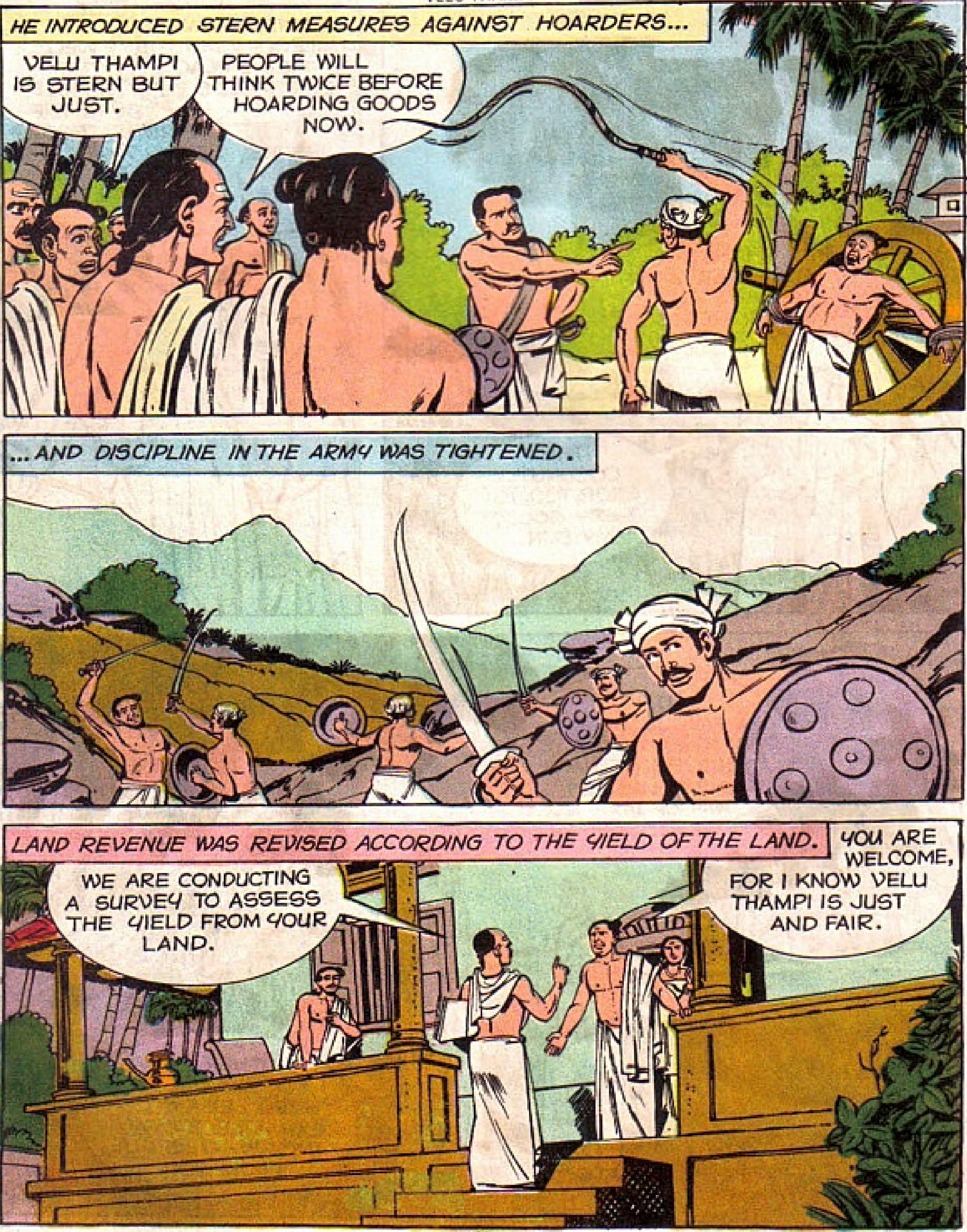

THE FORMER DIWAN WAS ARRESTED.
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS ?
WE ARE ONLY CARRYING OUT THE MAHARAJA'S ORDERS.
HE DESERVES THE PUNISHMENT!
TARAKAN FLED TO THE BRITISH RESIDENT FOR HELP.
I AM RUINED. YOU MUST HELP ME, COL. MACAULAY.
BE CALM! IF YOU HAVE A PLAN, TELL ME ABOUT IT.

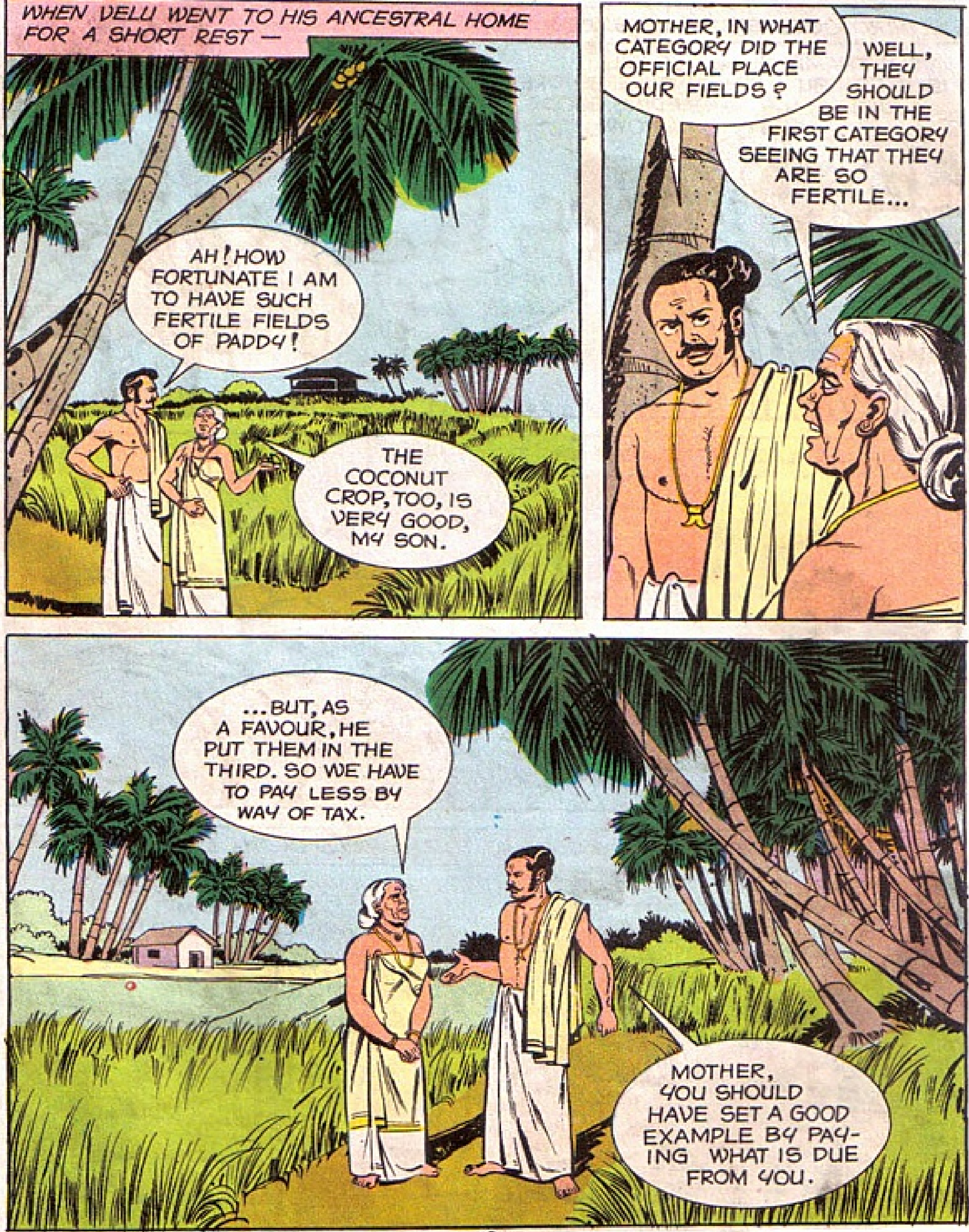

THE MAHARAJA'S TREATY WITH YOU IS DUE TO BE RENEWED SHORTLY.
THAT IS RIGHT. IN RETURN FOR OUR PROTECTION, HE HAS TO PAY US SIX LAKHS OF RUPEES.


INCREASE THE LEVY TO EIGHT LAKHS. THAT WILL RUIN HIM.
VERY CLEVER! HE WILL FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO PAY THE AMOUNT...


...BECAUSE I HAVE ALREADY EMPTIED THE STATE COFFERS! LET THE MAHARAJA AND HIS NEW DIWAN THINK TWICE BEFORE ANTAGONIZING TARAKAN!

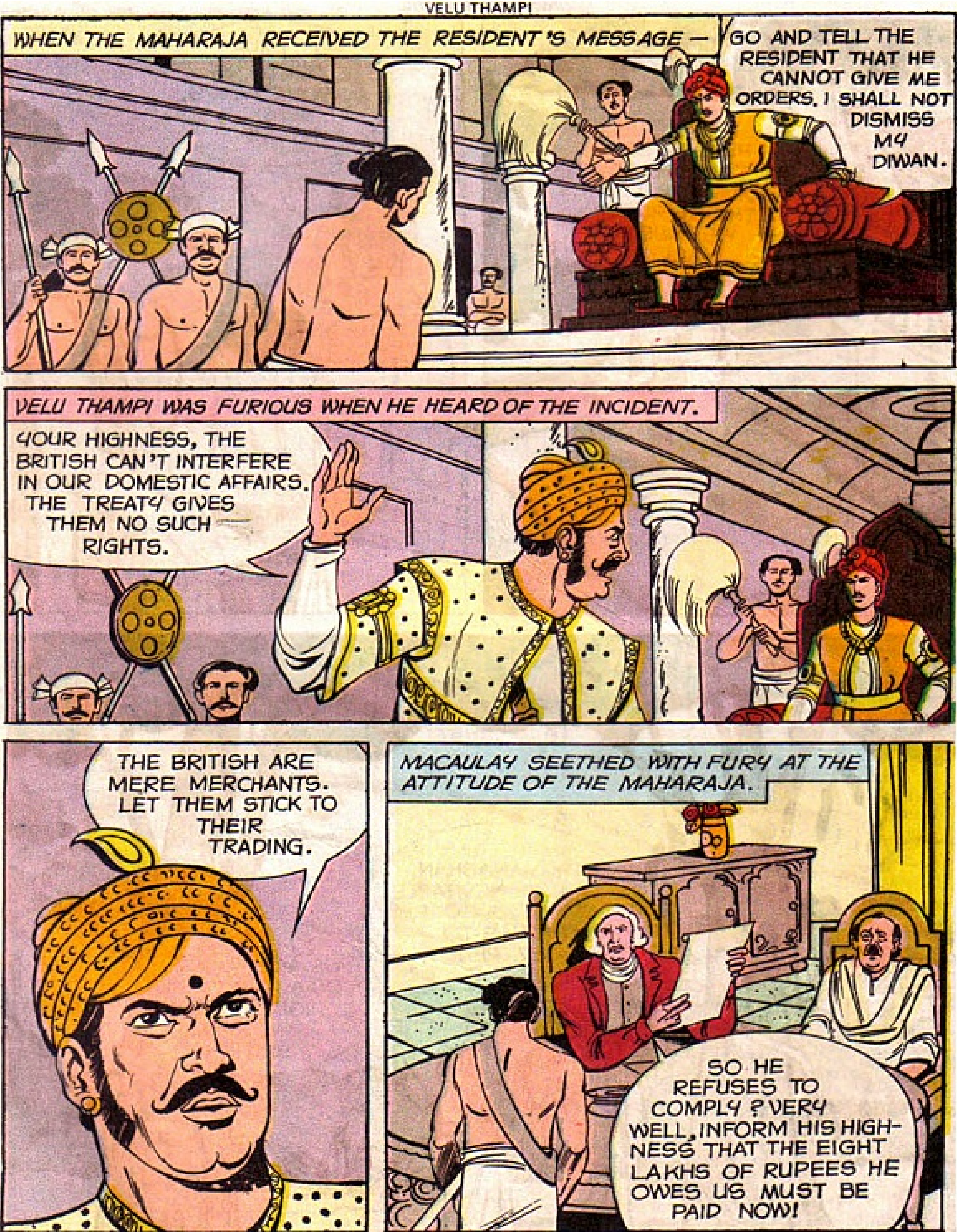

AT THE COURT OF THE MAHARAJA —
THE BRITISH ARE NOW DEMANDING EIGHT LAKHS OF RUPEES. THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!
YOUR HIGHNESS, WE HAVE NO CHOICE. OUR REFUSAL TO PAY WILL ANTAGONIZE THE BRITISH.
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO DO THAT NOW. LET US SIGN THE TREATY AND THEN BIDE OUR TIME.
ALL RIGHT, THAMPI.
VELU THAMPI WAS FACED WITH THE DIFFICULT TASK OF RAISING EIGHT LAKHS OF RUPEES.
PADMANABHAN, I HAVE TO RAISE THE MONEY SOMEHOW. STERN MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN.
DO AS YOU THINK FIT, BROTHER.


HE INTRODUCED STERN MEASURES AGAINST HOARDERS...
VELU THAMPI IS STERN BUT JUST.
PEOPLE WILL THINK TWICE BEFORE HOARDING GOODS NOW.
...AND DISCIPLINE IN THE ARMY WAS TIGHTENED.
LAND REVENUE WAS REVISED ACCORDING TO THE YIELD OF THE LAND.
WE ARE CONDUCTING A SURVEY TO ASSESS THE YIELD FROM YOUR LAND.
YOU ARE WELCOME, FOR I KNOW VELU THAMPI IS JUST AND FAIR.


WHEN VELU WENT TO HIS ANCESTRAL HOME FOR A SHORT REST —
AH! HOW FORTUNATE I AM TO HAVE SUCH FERTILE FIELDS OF PADDY!
THE COCONUT CROP, TOO, IS VERY GOOD, MY SON.
MOTHER, IN WHAT CATEGORY DID THE OFFICIAL PLACE OUR FIELDS?
WELL, THEY SHOULD BE IN THE FIRST CATEGORY SEEING THAT THEY ARE SO FERTILE...
...BUT, AS A FAVOUR, HE PUT THEM IN THE THIRD. SO WE HAVE TO PAY LESS BY WAY OF TAX.
MOTHER, YOU SHOULD HAVE SET A GOOD EXAMPLE BY PAYING WHAT IS DUE FROM YOU.

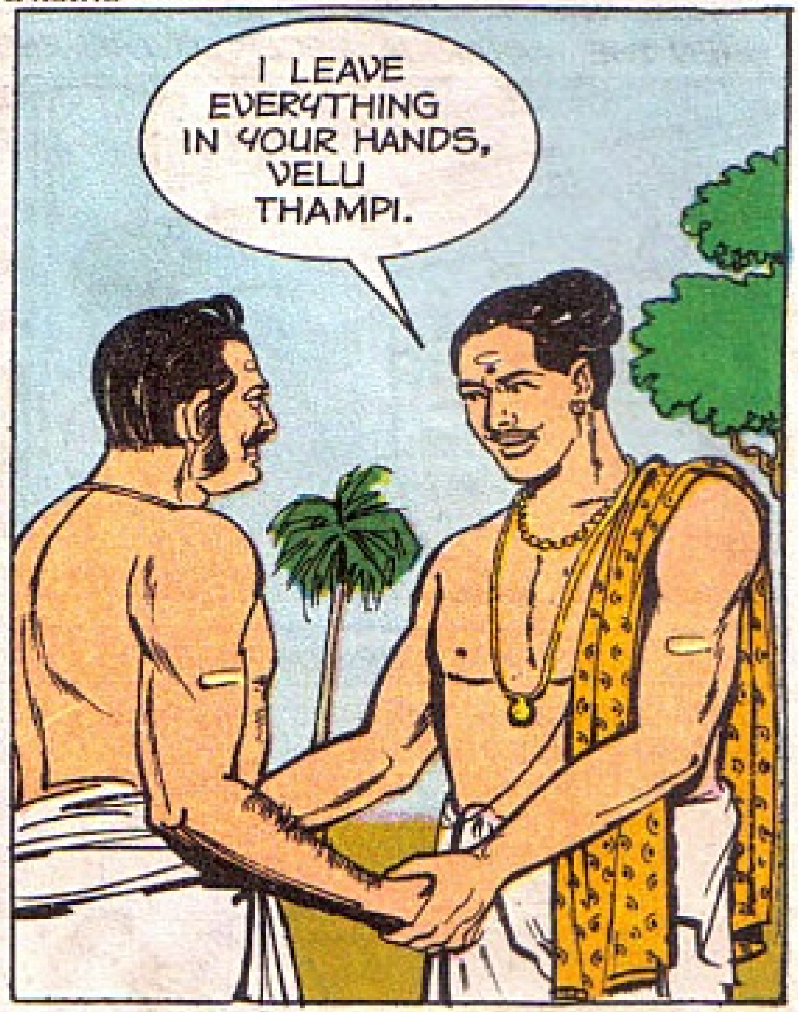

WHAT YOU DID WAS WRONG...
...BUT THE ACT OF THE OFFICIAL WAS UNPARDONABLE. I AM AFRAID HE WILL HAVE TO BE PUNISHED.
ON HIS RETURN TO TRIVANDRUM, VELU THAMPI SUMMONED ALL THE OFFICIALS.
LET IT BE KNOWN THAT HENCEFORTH CORRUPTION WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. NO MAN, RICH OR POOR, IS ABOVE THE LAW. THE LAW APPLIES TO EVERYONE EQUALLY—MYSELF INCLUDED!
MEANWHILE, BAD NEWS HAD REACHED TARAKAN.
MASTER, THE DIWAN HAS CONFISCATED ALL YOUR LAND BECAUSE YOU HAVE FAILED TO PAY YOUR TAXES.
OH, NO! I MUST GO AND SEE THE RESIDENT AT ONCE!

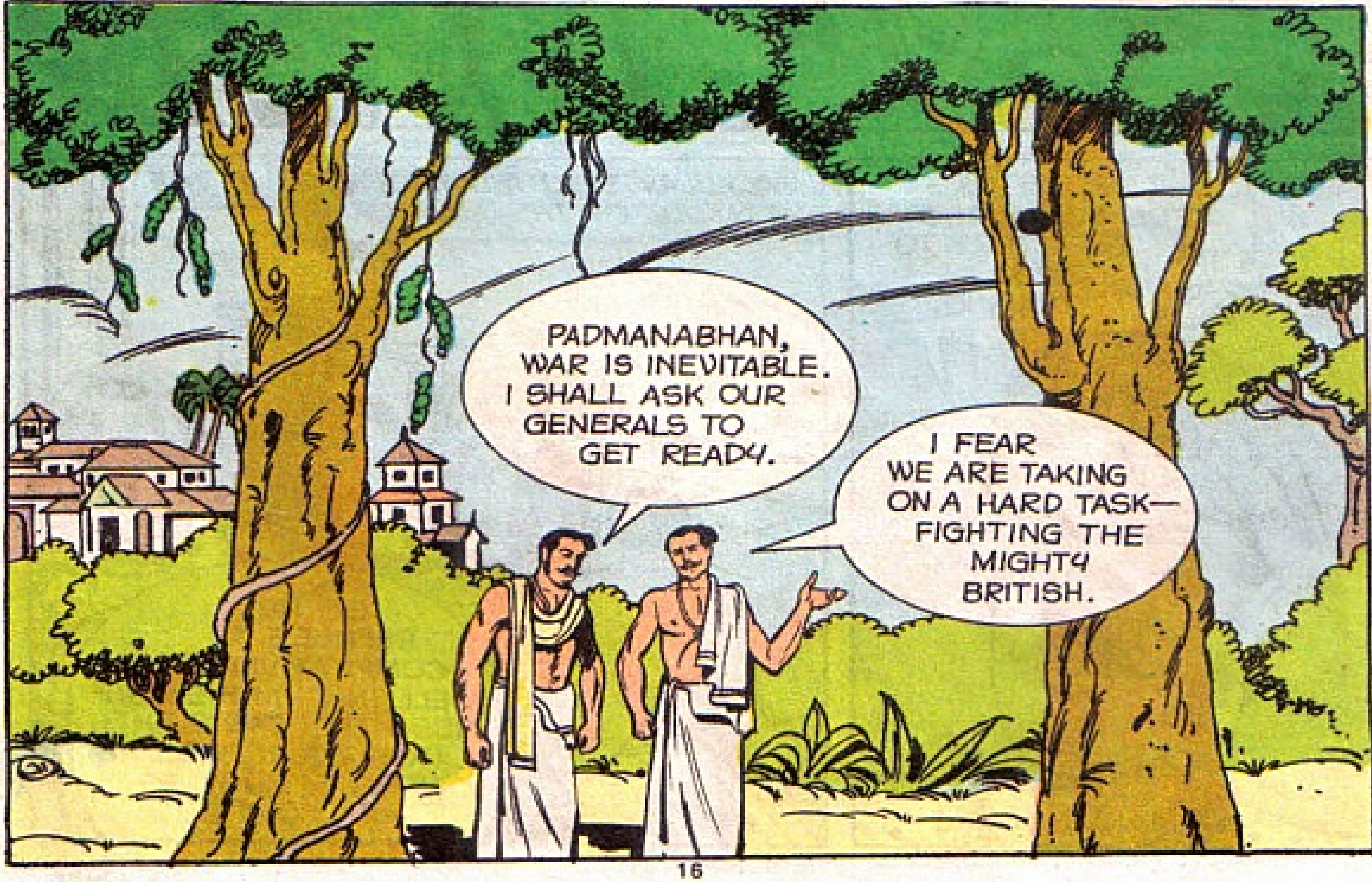

ONCE AGAIN, I COME TO YOU FOR HELP. MY LAND HAS BEEN CONFISCATED. I AM RUINED !
I SHALL PERSONALLY SEND A MESSENGER TO VELU THAMPI, ASKING HIM TO SPARE YOU.
VELU THAMPI REPLIED CURTLY, REFUSING THE RESIDENT'S REQUEST—
FOR YEARS, TARAKAN HAS OPPRESSED THE PEOPLE. NOW HE MUST PAY THE PRICE.
VELU THAMPI DARES TO REFUSE MY REQUEST ? I'LL CRUSH HIM ! I'LL ASK THE MAHARAJA TO DISMISS HIM.

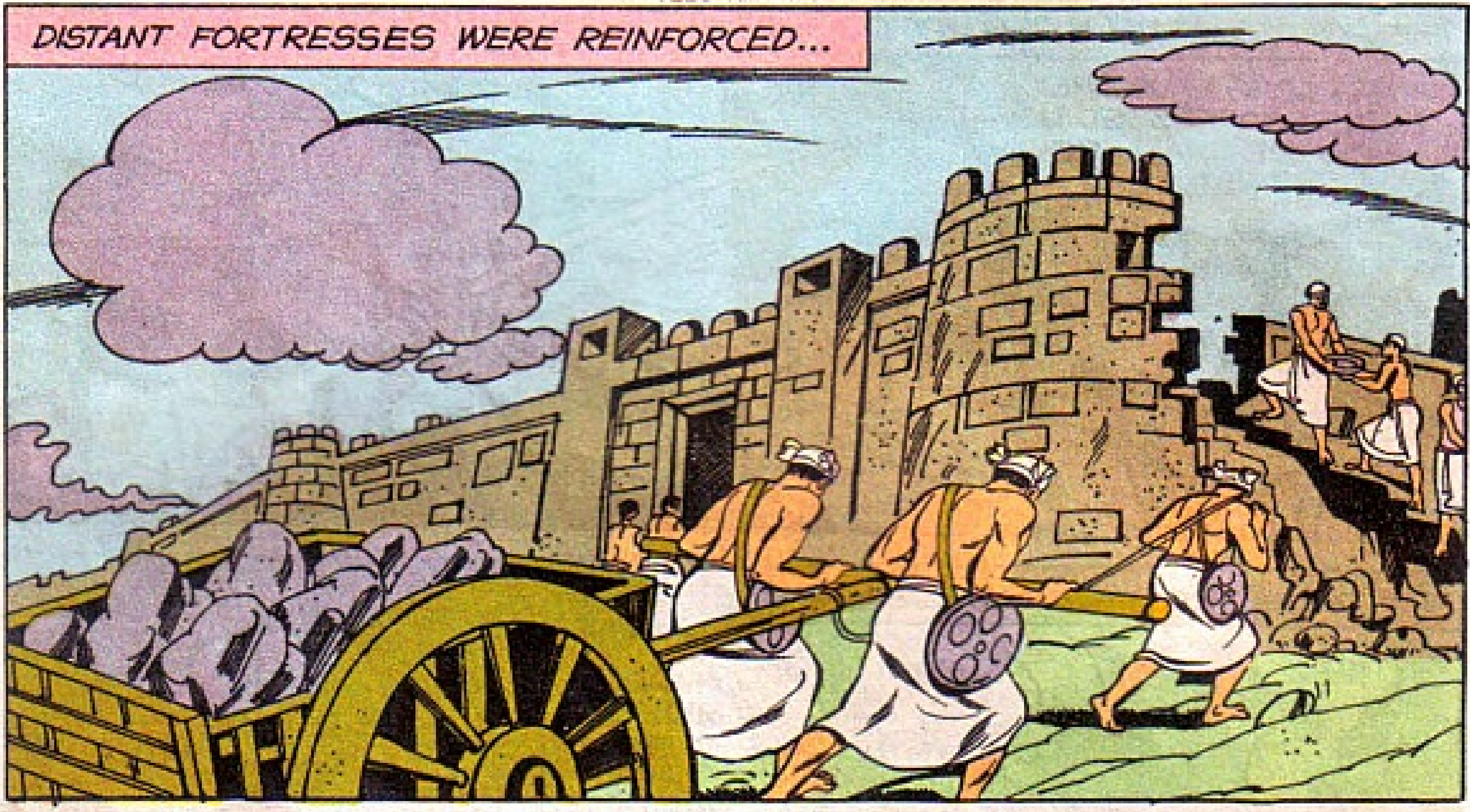


WHEN THE MAHARAJA RECEIVED THE RESIDENT'S MESSAGE —
GO AND TELL THE RESIDENT THAT HE CANNOT GIVE ME ORDERS. I SHALL NOT DISMISS MY DIWAN.
VELU THAMPI WAS FURIOUS WHEN HE HEARD OF THE INCIDENT.
YOUR HIGHNESS, THE BRITISH CAN'T INTERFERE IN OUR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. THE TREATY GIVES THEM NO SUCH — RIGHTS.
THE BRITISH ARE MERE MERCHANTS. LET THEM STICK TO THEIR TRADING.
MACAULAY SEETHED WITH FURY AT THE ATTITUDE OF THE MAHARAJA.
SO HE REFUSES TO COMPLY? VERY WELL, INFORM HIS HIGHNESS THAT THE EIGHT LAKHS OF RUPEES HE OWES US MUST BE PAID NOW!


YOUR HIGHNESS, WE CAN'T BE COWED DOWN FOREVER BY THE RESIDENT. WE MUST ACT.


I LEAVE EVERYTHING IN YOUR HANDS, VELU THAMPI.

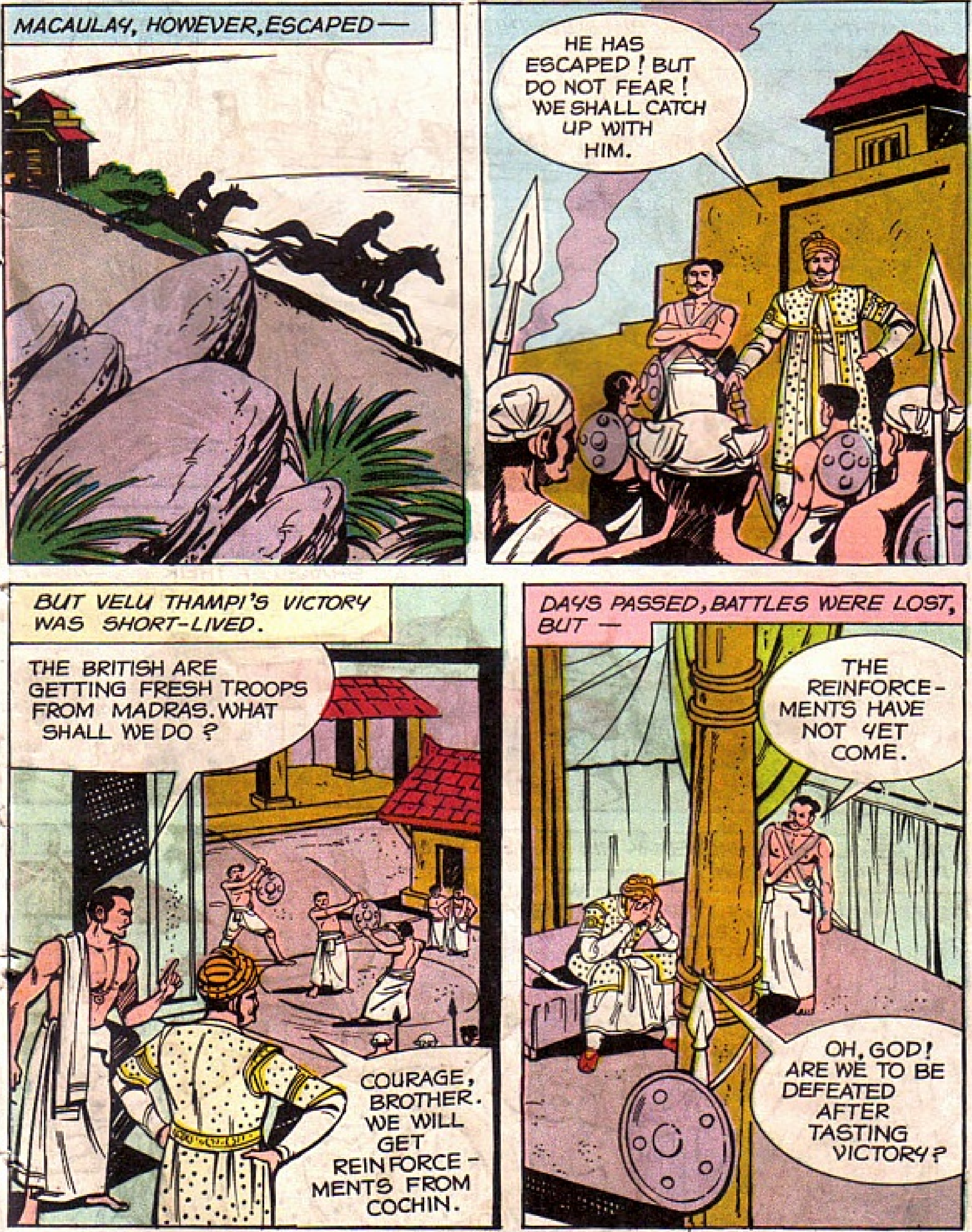

PADMANABHAN, WAR IS INEVITABLE. I SHALL ASK OUR GENERALS TO GET READY.
I FEAR WE ARE TAKING ON A HARD TASK— FIGHTING THE MIGHTY BRITISH.

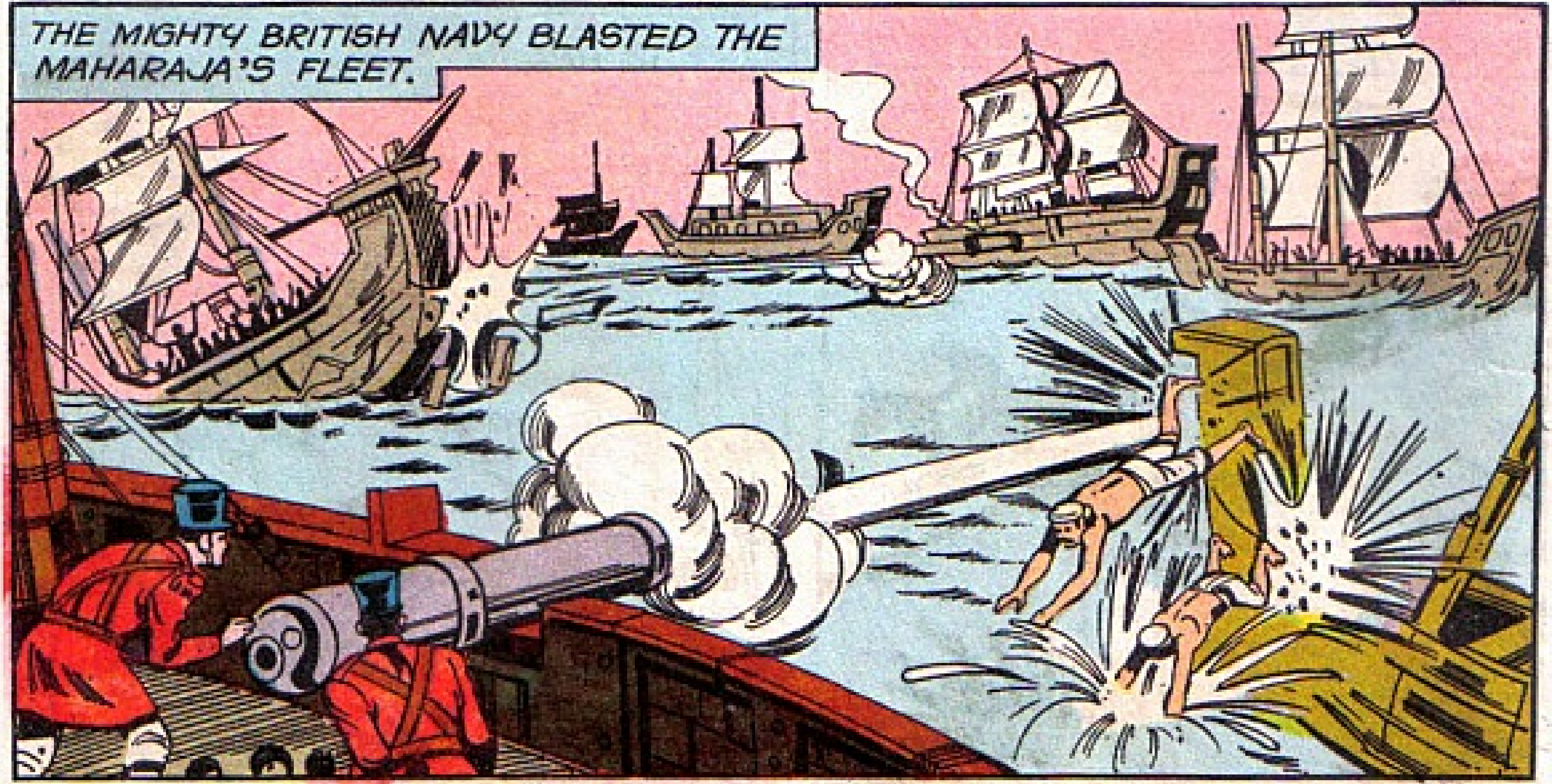

DISTANT FORTRESSES WERE REINFORCED...


... AND TROOPS WERE MOVED TO STRATEGIC POINTS.


THE TROOPS WERE KEPT IN FIGHTING TRIM.
THE MAHARAJA OF COCHIN HAS PROMISED TO SUPPORT US AGAINST THE BRITISH.
WE HAVE TO STAND TO-GETHER IF WE ARE TO DEFEAT THE BRITISH.


THE FORCES OF VELU THAMPI CLASHED WITH THE BRITISH.
TOO LONG HAVE THE BRITISH OPPRESSED US. NOW WE SHALL BE FREE.
ON THE 18 TH OF DECEMBER, 1808 —
ONWARD, MY MEN! WE ARE AT THE GATES OF THE RESIDENCY!
THE RESIDENCY HAS FALLEN!
DOWN WITH THE BRITISH!


MACAULAY, HOWEVER, ESCAPED —
HE HAS ESCAPED! BUT DO NOT FEAR! WE SHALL CATCH UP WITH HIM.
BUT VELU THAMPI'S VICTORY WAS SHORT-LIVED.
THE BRITISH ARE GETTING FRESH TROOPS FROM MADRAS. WHAT SHALL WE DO?
COURAGE, BROTHER. WE WILL GET REINFORCE-MENTS FROM COCHIN.
DAYS PASSED, BATTLES WERE LOST, BUT —
THE REINFORCE-MENTS HAVE NOT YET COME.
OH, GOD! ARE WE TO BE DEFEATED AFTER TASTING VICTORY?


THE MIGHTY BRITISH NAVY BLASTED THE MAHARAJA'S FLEET.

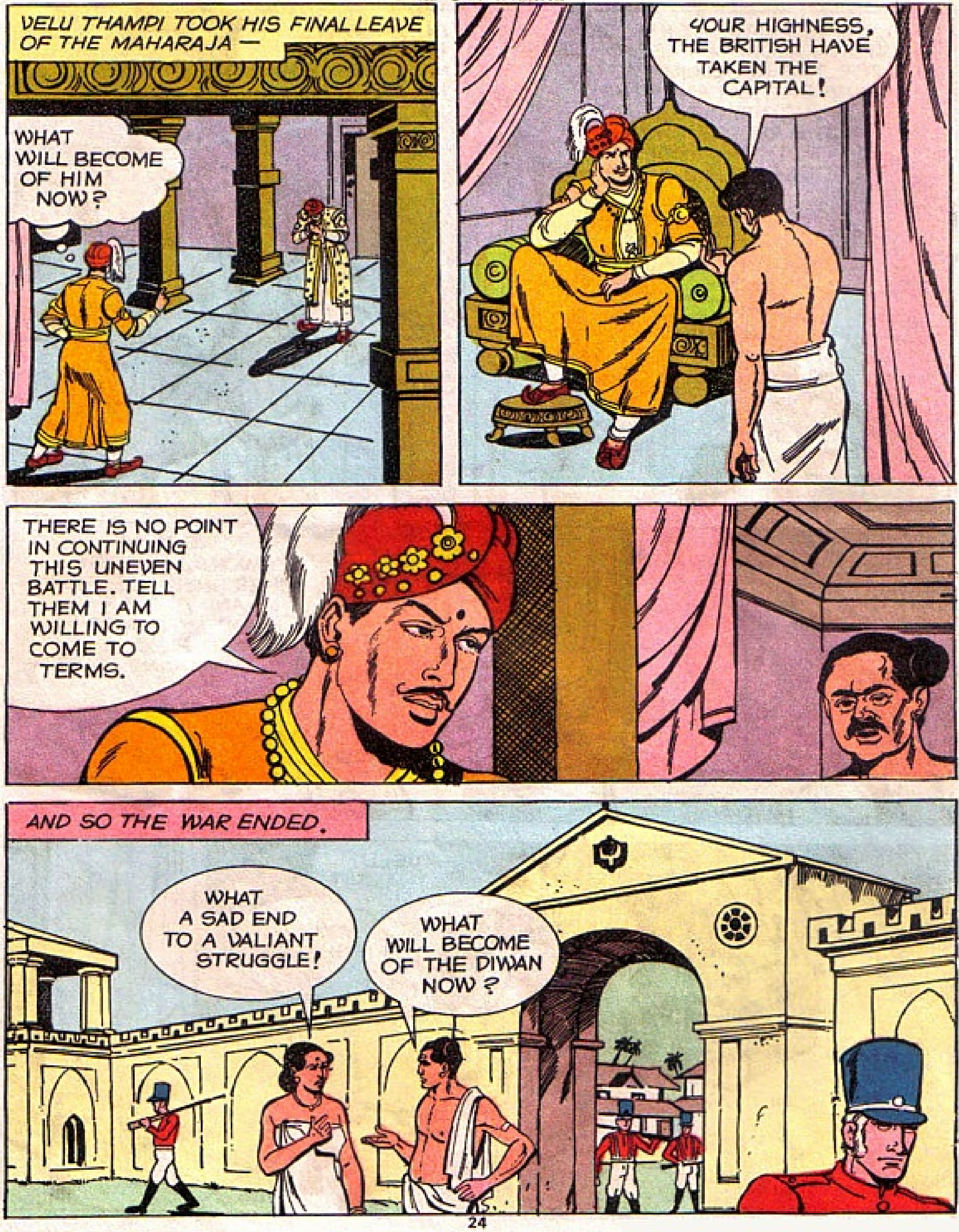

YET VELU THAMPI REMAINED UNDAUNTED.
ONE LAST EFFORT, MY FRIENDS, AND WE SHALL SHAKE OFF THEIR YOKE — AND BE FREE.


THE PEOPLE WERE MOVED BY HIS IMPASSIONED PLEA FOR FREEDOM.
FREEDOM!
VELU THAMPI WILL LEAD US TO FREEDOM!
WE WILL DIE RATHER THAN BOW TO THE BRITISH!

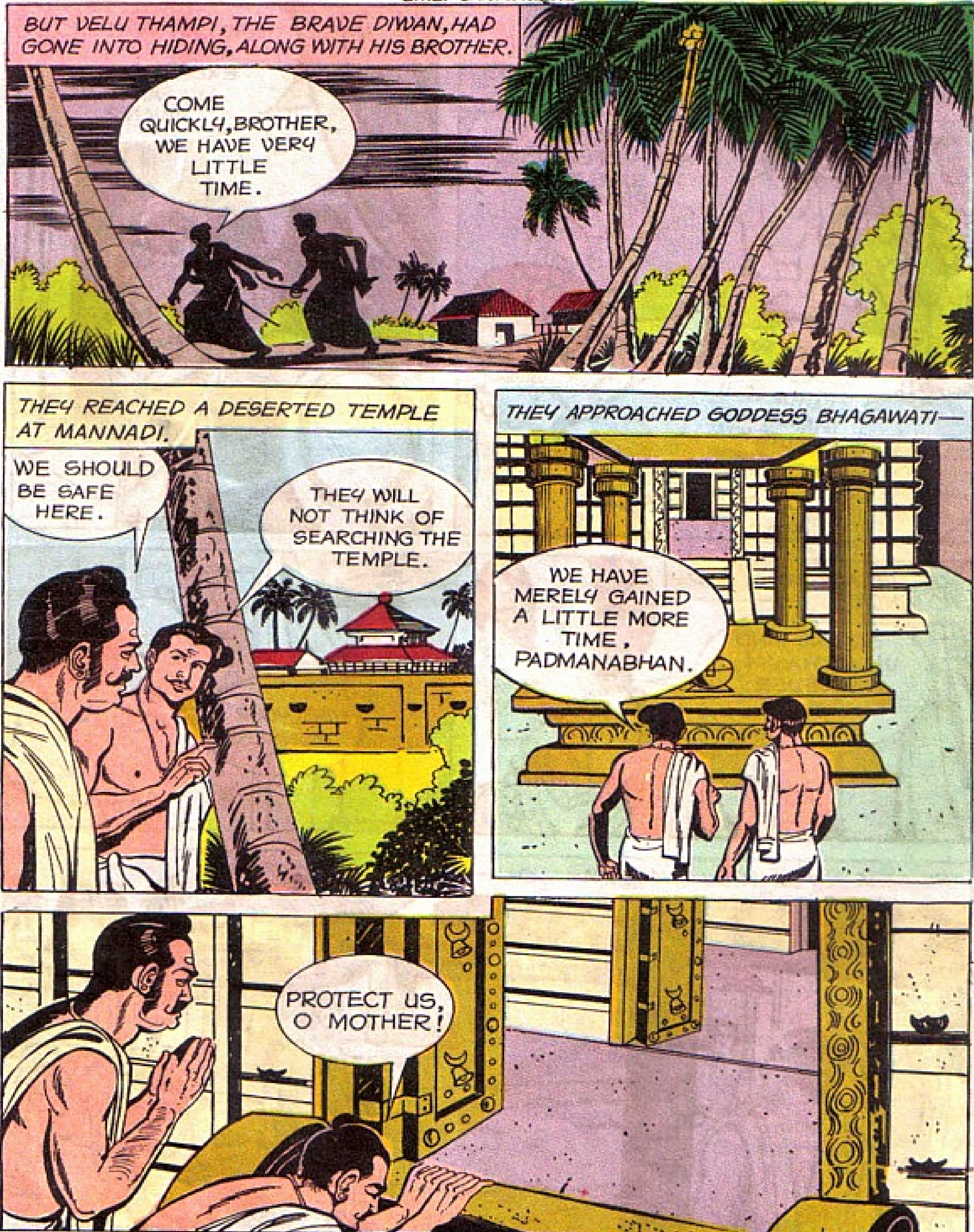

BUT, ALAS! ONE BY ONE, THE TOWNS FELL TO THE BRITISH...
...AND FINALLY THEY CAME VERY NEAR TRIVANDRUM.
THE BRITISH ARE COMING!
ALL IS LOST!
TRIVANDRUM WILL FALL TO THE BRITISH ANY MOMENT NOW!
BROTHER, I HAVE ONE TASK LEFT....
VELU THAMPI HASTENED TO KILIMANOOR WHERE THE MAHARAJA WAS IN RESIDENCE.
I HAVE COME TO SEE HIS HIGHNESS ON URGENT BUSINESS!


WHAT NEWS, THAMPI?
BAD NEWS, YOUR HIGHNESS.
THE BRITISH ARE NEARING TRIVANDRUM. DEFEAT IS INEVITABLE.
OH, NO! THIS IS THE END!
NO! THIS MAY BE THE END OF VELU THAMPI, BUT YOUR HIGHNESS AND TRAVANCORE SHALL COME TO NO HARM.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THAMPI?
IF YOUR HIGHNESS WILL BE SO GOOD AS TO READ THIS DOCUMENT....

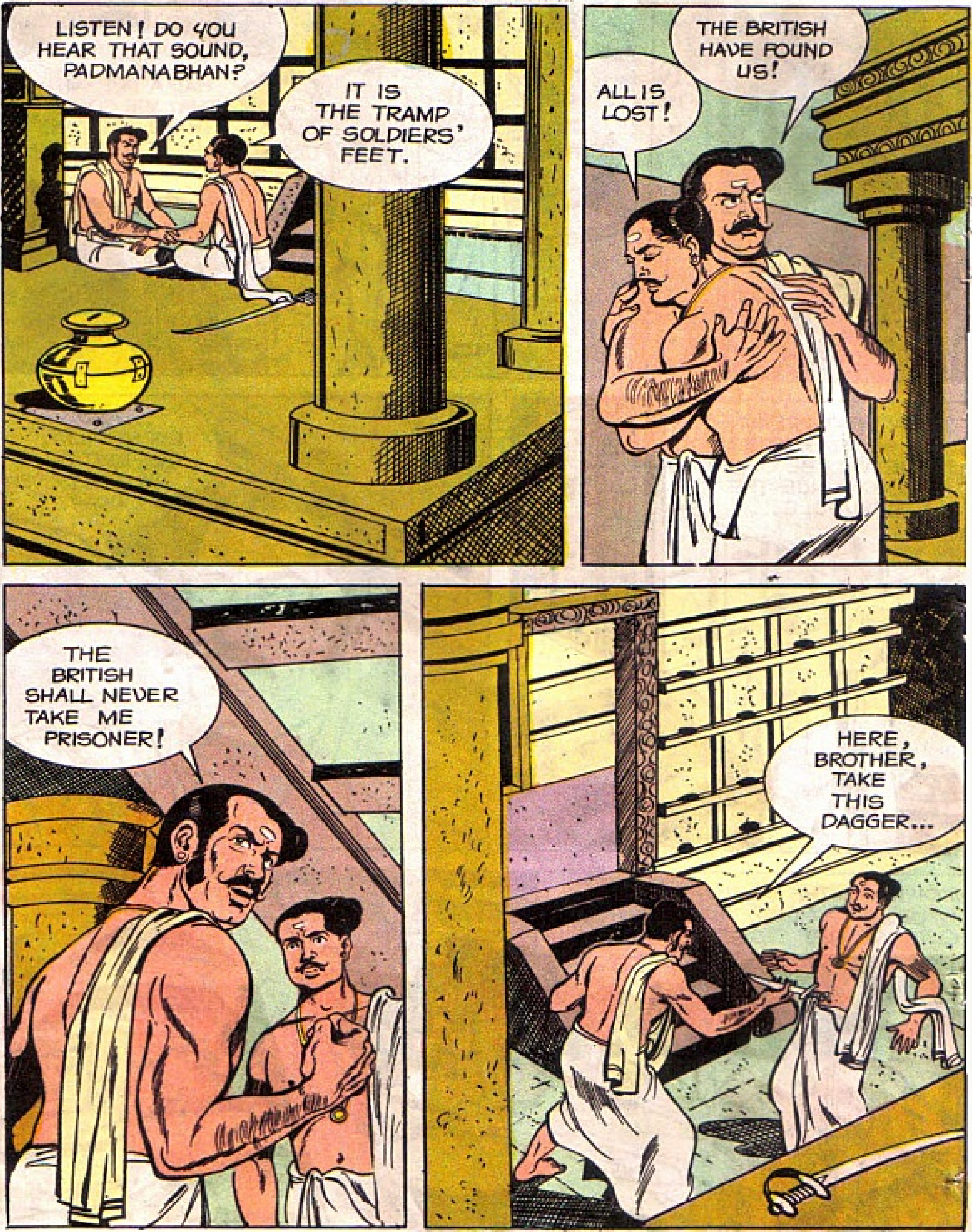

HERE I HAVE CONFESSED THAT I ALONE AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REBELLION AGAINST THE BRITISH AND THAT YOUR HIGHNESS AND THE PEOPLE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT MY PLAN.
IN THIS WAY, I SHALL SAVE MY RULER AND MY COUNTRY FROM THE WRATH OF THE BRITISH.
HERE IS MY SWORD, MY MOST CHERISHED POSSESSION. I HAND IT OVER TO YOU, MY SOVEREIGN, AND PLEDGE UNDYING LOYALTY.
VELU THAMPI!
YOUR HIGHNESS!


VELU THAMPI TOOK HIS FINAL LEAVE OF THE MAHARAJA —
WHAT WILL BECOME OF HIM NOW?
YOUR HIGHNESS, THE BRITISH HAVE TAKEN THE CAPITAL!
THERE IS NO POINT IN CONTINUING THIS UNEVEN BATTLE. TELL THEM I AM WILLING TO COME TO TERMS.
AND SO THE WAR ENDED.
WHAT A SAD END TO A VALIANT STRUGGLE!
WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE DIWAN NOW?


THE BRITISH TOOK OVER. THANKS TO VELU THAMPI'S NOBLE GESTURE, THE MAHARAJA CAME TO NO HARM. BUT HE WAS HELPLESS IN THE HANDS OF THE BRITISH.
THE BRITISH ARE DETERMINED TO HAVE THEIR REVENGE.
YOU ARE TO ARREST THE TRAITOR VELU THAMPI, AND EXECUTE HIM! — BY ORDER OF THE RESIDENT
HOW CAN I ORDER THE ARREST AND THE EXECUTION OF MY FAITHFUL DIWAN?
BUT THE MAHARAJA HAD NO CHOICE.
GO AND FIND VELU THAMPI, WHEREVER HE MAY BE.
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS!
THE SEARCH FOR VELU THAMPI WAS ON —

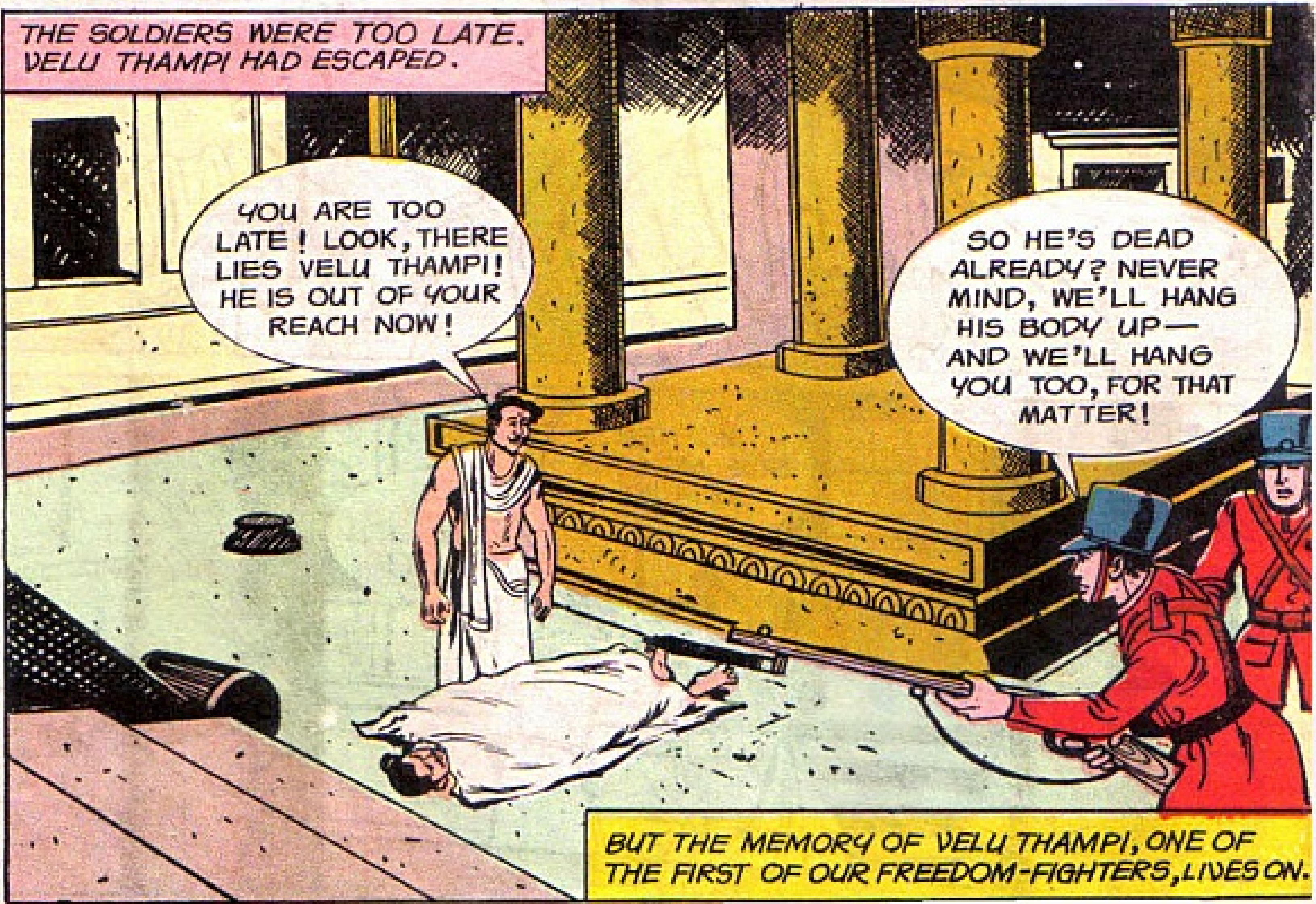

BUT VELU THAMPI, THE BRAVE DIWAN, HAD GONE INTO HIDING, ALONG WITH HIS BROTHER.
COME QUICKLY, BROTHER, WE HAVE VERY LITTLE TIME.
THEY REACHED A DESERTED TEMPLE AT MANNADI.
WE SHOULD BE SAFE HERE.
THEY WILL NOT THINK OF SEARCHING THE TEMPLE.
THEY APPROACHED GODDESS BHAGAWATI—
WE HAVE MERELY GAINED A LITTLE MORE TIME, PADMANABHAN.
PROTECT US, O MOTHER!


I ONCE HAD A DREAM... THAT WE COULD SHAKE OFF THE YOKE OF BRITISH TYRANNY.
TODAY THAT DREAM LIES SHATTERED. BUT THERE WILL BE OTHERS TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE...
...AND EVENTUALLY, THE BRITISH WILL BE DRIVEN AWAY.
MEANWHILE THE BRITISH WERE INFORMED OF VELU THAMPI'S HIDE-OUT. THE NET CLOSED IN —


LISTEN! DO YOU HEAR THAT SOUND, PADMANABHAN?
IT IS THE TRAMP OF SOLDIERS' FEET.
THE BRITISH HAVE FOUND US!
ALL IS LOST!
THE BRITISH SHALL NEVER TAKE ME PRISONER!
HERE, BROTHER, TAKE THIS DAGGER...

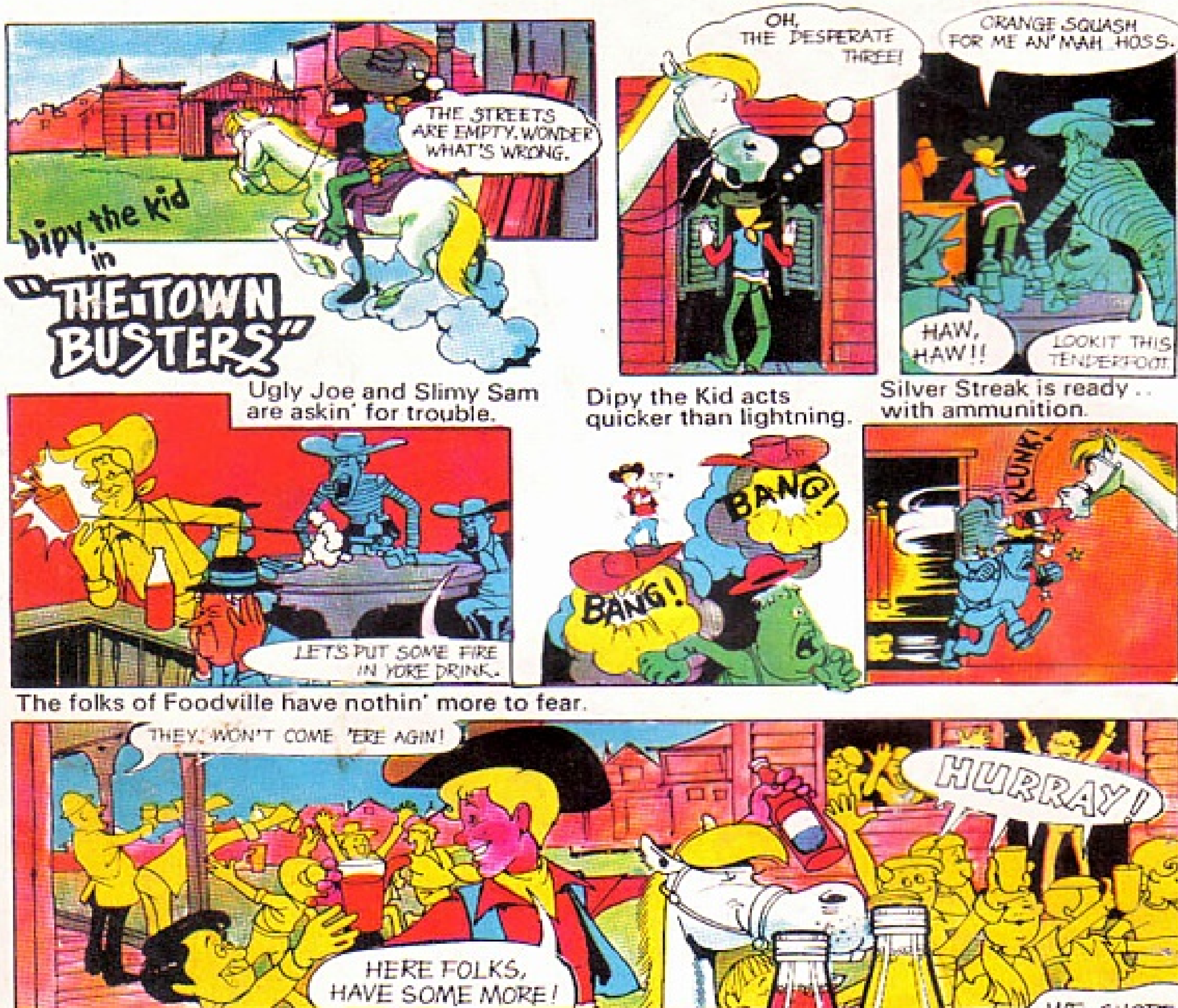

... AND IF YOU LOVE ME, KILL ME, AND GIVE ME THE FREEDOM I CRAVE FOR!
OH, I CANNOT! FORGIVE ME, I CANNOT STRIKE!
COWARD!!
MOTHER, GIVE ME YOUR BLESSINGS.
NO BROTHER, DON'T!

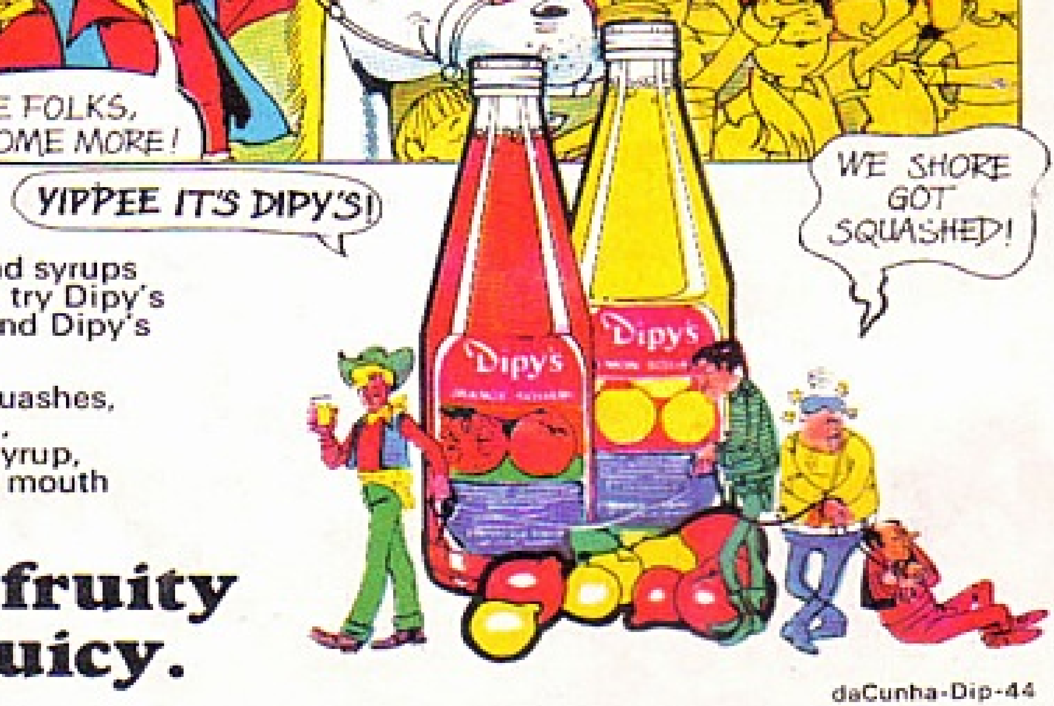

VERY SOON, THE TEMPLE WAS SURROUNDED BY THE BRITISH.
AT LAST! VELU THAMPI IS IN OUR HANDS!


THE SOLDIERS WERE TOO LATE. VELU THAMPI HAD ESCAPED.
YOU ARE TOO LATE! LOOK, THERE LIES VELU THAMPI! HE IS OUT OF YOUR REACH NOW!
SO HE'S DEAD ALREADY? NEVER MIND, WE'LL HANG HIS BODY UP— AND WE'LL HANG YOU TOO, FOR THAT MATTER!
BUT THE MEMORY OF VELU THAMPI, ONE OF THE FIRST OF OUR FREEDOM-FIGHTERS, LIVES ON.

May 1, 1980
Regd. No: MH-BY-South-731

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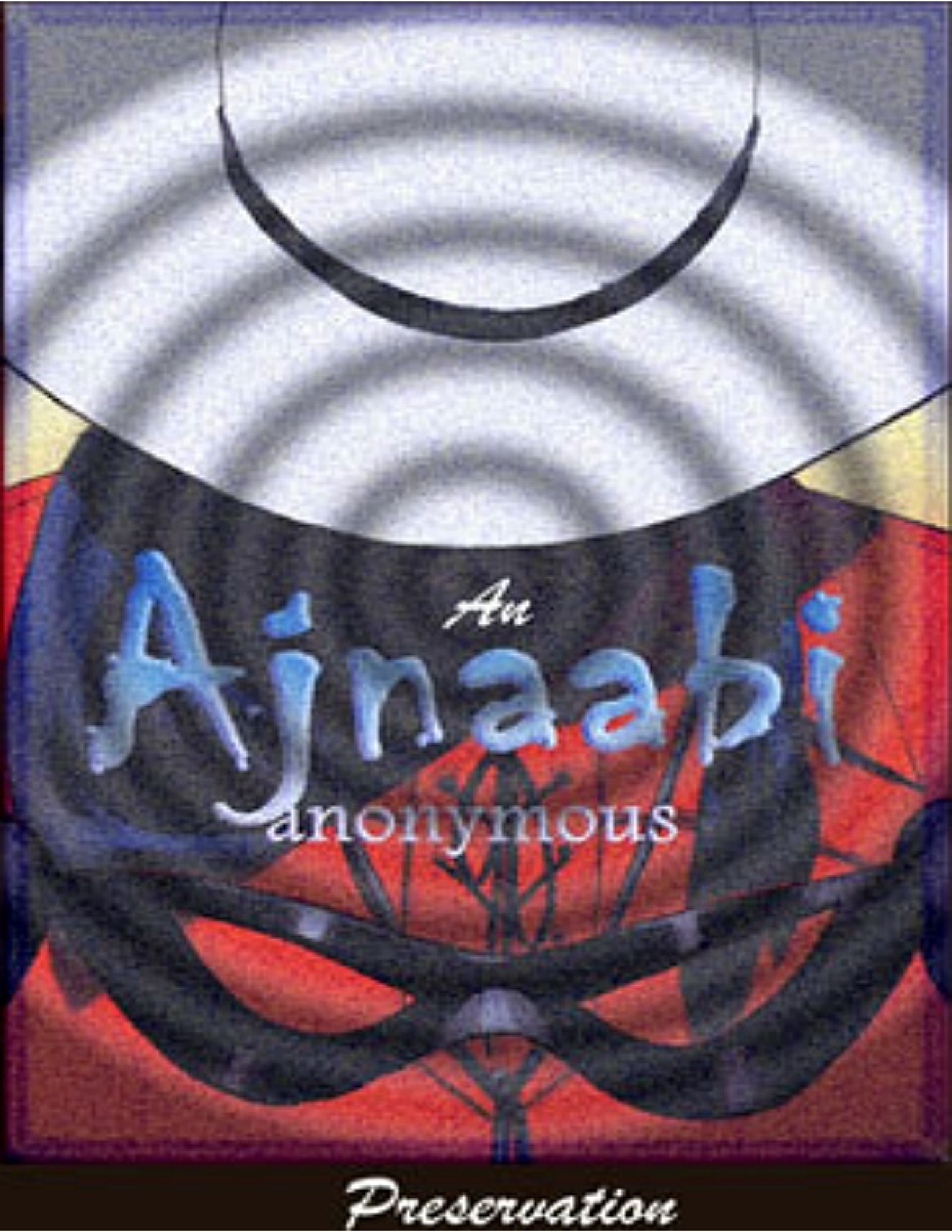


Right pardner. Dipy's squashes and syrups are a real knock-out! And just yuh try Dipy's ketchups, jams and jellies, you'll find Dipy's is the fastest draw on the table!

Dipy's Lemon, Orange, Mango Squashes, Lemon Barley Water, Lime Cordial, Pineapple Crush, delicious Rose Syrup, Frolic Fruit Flavoured Syrup and a mouth waterin' variety of other syrups!!

Dipy's is real fruity —so fresh 'n' juicy.

daCunha-Dip-44


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